

As The World Falls Down by Thetolwrits

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Characters: Billy Hargrove, Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

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Summary:

For Billy Hargrove, the end of the world was like heaven. He was finally free to do whatever he wanted. The only problem? He had a princess breathing down his neck at every turn and a family of runts to take care of.

Steve Harrington hated zombies. He hated asshole raiders and the constant anxiety he felt when faced with the possibility of losing the people he loves. The end of the world fucking sucks and Billy Hargrove doesn't make it any better.

1. The Way Things Were

Author's Note:

Do I have four other projects to be working on? Yes.
Am I still starting a new one? Also yes.

The beginning might be a sore topic because I put in how the upside-down sickness spread so I made sure to put in a skip point if you don't want to read that!

I really just love zombie media! I'm super excited to write this!

Also, just as a side note - Hopper didn't go missing and the Byers stayed in Hawkins

Okay! I hope you enjoy it!

The day the world ended wasn't started with a boom... It started with a cough...

The end of the world started with the inky blackness of the upside-down creeping into the lungs of Martha Mellows. She was a 20-year-old working for Macy's when the battle of Starcourt happened. The Mind Flayer hadn't gotten to her... The upside-down did. While the Mind Flayer worked on its creations, the upside-down worked on its own.

An illness. A sickness designed to take out the human race. The plague of all plagues to make the Earth suitable for the creatures of the alternate dimension. Spores, airborne through ventilation systems in the mall. Once you inhaled the spores, they latched onto your cells and began to attack you from the inside.

Martha thought she had the flu for a week, then she thought she had pneumonia, after that she began to get worried about lung cancer. She flooded her body with medicines, antibiotics, fluids and the virus just got stronger inside her. It mutated with every treatment she took. The very things meant to remedy her illness only made her more unwell.

Martha moved from Hawkins with her parents to Indianapolis to try to find doctors better suited to treat her illness. She was now in the biggest city in Indiana and she had to take a plane to get there. She had met hundreds of people that day... many of whom were traveling... *internationally*.

What Martha didn't know was that during her move and stay in Hawkins she had spread the disease with every surface she touched, every time she coughed, every time she had contact with another person or animal and from there, the spread was rapid and completely uncontrolled.

Martha turned completely on November 18th, 1985. It had taken six months, since the day she became infected for her to lose the battle completely. The illness had mutated yet again. After reducing Martha's brain to nothing but barely firing synapses, the illness gave Martha a new message.

Hunger.

She wasn't exactly dead, but her heart had stopped beating regularly and her lungs had lost the need for air.

Martha became patient zero. She bit seven nurses, a doctor, and both of her parents before they were able to restrain her.

The disease spread faster that way. It slipped directly into the bloodstream and within a couple of days... They were turned too.

November 18th, 1985 was the first day of the end of the world.

Three days earlier, Billy Hargrove had returned home from the hospital.

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Neil Hargrove had been sick for months; coughing, sneezing, lying around in bed. While he was getting worse, Billy was getting better. Stronger than before. Neil went into the hospital the day Billy was released.

Billy was relieved that he wasn't going to be getting a stiff and awkward welcome home party from his family. It was awkward enough trying to ask Susan to pass the salt when they sat at the dinner table. Let alone for them to try to stand around and act like they were a big happy family that was glad he was home.

Hawkins was... *different* now. Everything seemed different now. Especially Max.

The shit she'd been dealing with. On top of him constantly treating her like garbage... She's not his sister, but she's still just a kid. A badass kid that deserves more credit than he ever thought to give her, but still a kid. Surprisingly, She'd been there for him. Even after all the shit they'd been through, she was there when he needed her. She snuck his books into the hospital, let him get updates about things on the outside of his little room, brought him his school work once his senior year started. She was even there when he learned to walk again.

Billy had been undergoing physical therapy. He was better. Not yet a hundred percent but better. He felt stronger in a weird way. Re-learning things wasn't as hard as it should have been. He could walk normally again, and he was cleared to start working out normally again. He only had a few more appointments left and he would be officially done. It had only taken five months, and he was almost back to normal. Normal wasn't something Billy ever thought he could achieve again after everything happened.

He had faced a monster, *became* a monster, and lived. His heart was somehow still beating. Hell, the fact that he could move at all was a medical mystery and here he was *walking*. He had scars, of course. Scar tissue wound its way along his limbs and torso. He'd be lying if he said he still felt comfortable with his shirt off... but they were reminders.

Something to keep him grounded and remind him of where he came from. The scars reminded him of how much he had to change to leave that person behind him. The person that had been weak enough to be possessed in the first place. That person who stepped on people

and cared only about himself. Billy didn't know who he was or who he wanted to become, but he knew he was better than *that*.

All the time in the hospital led him to realize how similar he had been acting to Neil. He threw up the first time he thought about it. He was so disgusted with himself that he wanted to die right there and then. He screamed and fought with the very doctors trying to save his life for days, cursed the world that brought him back so he could suffer again.

Billy didn't know why he was alive. The doctors told him he shouldn't be. Max told him that she *watched* him die. Billy didn't have the slightest clue how he survived, but he was here. He could feel the sunshine on his face and the slight fall chill in the air. He was alive, and he was going to cherish it.

On his first day home, Susan dropped him off and returned to the hospital to stay with Neil. The moment he set foot in the door, Max was just coming home from school. They didn't say anything; she just hugged him. It was stiff and slightly awkward, but it was over quickly and she was out the door to go hang out with her dweeb friends.

Billy only cared about one thing that day, anyway. As soon as max was gone he ran to the garage. His baby sat there under a tarp and covered in dust. Shelly. She'd been destroyed that night, completely totaled. It was one of the few good things Neil had done for him in his life. He had taken her to a shop and fixed her up for him. Billy still didn't know if it was because he wanted to sell her or if he wanted to do something nice for his son, that almost died. Either way, She had been easier to fix than Billy. She'd gotten out of the shop a whole two months before he did.

She looked good. The shop had done well. She looked almost as good as the day he'd bought her. He ran his hand along the smooth, sleek metal, collecting dust as he went. His lips down-turned into a frown before he decided to take her to the carwash. Billy finally started to feel normal as he slid into the driver's seat. He paused slightly, his hands hesitating before taking the steering wheel. His fingers molded around the metal, squeezing it tightly in his hands before he looked around for his keys.

He finally found them in the sun visor of his passenger seat. He put them into the ignition and turned. She roared to life. Billy couldn't help the grin that spread onto his face as he sat back into his seat and felt her engine purr. He pushed the button on the garage door opener and Shelly slid out and onto the pavement, screaming down the street once again.

He spent the first two days driving around town and the surrounding towns. Susan and Neil were still at the hospital, the doctors couldn't figure out what was wrong with his father. Truth be told, Billy couldn't figure out what was wrong with him either. The third day he was home, the first day of the end, Billy took Max to go visit Neil and Susan in the hospital.

Billy didn't know what to feel as he stood there in that hospital room, looking down at his father. He looked... bad. He was pale, could hardly breathe, his eyes were grey. Billy wanted to say something but... he didn't have anything to say. Susan was fretting over her husband while Max and Billy stood off to the side. Neil was wheezing with every breath, his eyes slowly closing.

Suddenly the heart monitor flatlines, the loud, screaming, whine of life lost echoing in the silent room. Max was the one to move first, she ran out into the hallway, yelling to get the attention of the doctors. Susan began to wail, sobbing into Neil's chest. Billy stood rigid, not believing his eyes, not believing that this was happening. He wasn't exactly... sad. He didn't feel anything.

The heart monitor picked up a heartbeat. A single small movement of the organ before Neil sat up in bed. Billy's breath caught in his throat as Susan started to cry harder, throwing her arms around Neil's neck, shouting about it being a miracle. Neil hadn't said a word, but he looked directly into Billy's eyes as he dug his teeth into his wife's neck... and ripped out her throat.

Billy can't remember if he screamed, but he remembers that he ran. As Max burst back into the room, she screamed, taking in the scene before her. He had never moved so fast in his life, grabbing her and taking her away. He didn't look back. He sprinted as fast as he could, dragging Max along until they were in the parking lot. He just needed to get them out, get them the ***fuck*** away from that place. Billy's hands shook as he forced the key into the ignition. Max suddenly reached over and placed her hand on his bicep. He didn't notice how much he was trembling until then.

He looked at her. She was crying, shaking just as bad as he was. They hugged, clinging to each other until Billy pulled away to take them home.

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When they got home, Billy got a call from the hospital. Susan had been pronounced dead, and Neil had to be restrained. He was placed

into the mental ward for now. Billy didn't know what to say. He just agreed numbly to all they were saying until the phone call ended.

He didn't know how to tell Max, so he didn't that night. He just turned on the news and tried to get out of his head. He spent all of ten minutes watching before breaking news cut through the last segment about some stupid legal case going on in Chicago.

"Breaking news here tonight in Indianapolis. A teenage girl has been admitted into the hospital after months of being ill. She died this morning before awakening again and biting several of her caretakers before being restrained. More on this after the brea—" Suddenly every light in the house turned off. Billy jumped up, checking through the window to see that all the lights in the neighborhood were out. Great. A power outage just what they needed right now. He sighed and began searching for a flashlight in the kitchen.

He'd gotten through two drawers before max came in with her light and her walkie talkie. He could hear the voices of the kids all talking over each other. He assumed it was the entire "party" as Max called her loser brigade. She helped Billy find his flashlight, and the two went back into the living room. Billy turning on the battery-powered radio to try to find the news station. Max was scared. Billy knew that he just... He didn't know how to comfort her. He didn't know if he should even try.

They fell asleep that night in the living room, listening to the news.

They spent two weeks indoors. The cases were popping up all over the world. That's what Billy called them. The documented attacks that were the same as Neil and Susan. The "cases." It was easier that way in his brain, trying to put distance between the fact that this shit was so terrifying and that people were dying left and right.

After two weeks the party decided they all needed to get together. Billy took max over to the Byers' place. He didn't think he'd be invited inside so he sat on the hood of his car, smoking a cigarette and staring at the sky.

He heard the door to the house open but didn't bother looking up. Someone sat beside him suddenly. "You got any more of those?" Billy was sorta in shock, Steve Harrington sat beside him, staring at his pack of cigarettes expectantly. Billy didn't know what to say, they'd been avoiding each other since... *that* night.

Steve made a face at him, tilting his head and looking at him with those deep brown doe eyes. "Billy? Can I get one or?" Billy just nods dumbly, handing over his lighter and a cigarette. The two sat watching the sun dip below the horizon in silence. The world was ending, yet again.

2. And How They'll Never Be Again

Summary for the Chapter:

The gang has to get out of Hawkins.

Notes for the Chapter:

SORRY BUT SOME PEOPLE DIE IN THIS CHAPTER
BE WARNED

Steve started to shiver as the sun completely faded from view along the horizon. Billy turned to look at him. "Cold, Harrington?"

Steve shrugs hugging himself as he watches the light dip below the trees. "Yeah. I guess, sorta." He mumbles as Billy frowns and starts taking off his jacket. He wasn't that cold, anyway. Harrington was just a baby and watching him shiver was annoying. He silently placed his leather jacket over Steve's shoulders. He looked away from him awkwardly as Steve made a soft sound, surprised.

Steve shakes his head and sighs before pulling the jacket tighter around him. "What are you doing here, Hargrove?" Billy shrugs. Why was he here? He didn't have anywhere better to be, and he... didn't want to leave Max alone. He felt responsible for her now. Not in the way Neil had tried to drill into his head, but he cared about her. Billy sighs out his smoke, leaning back on the hood of his Camaro as he looks at the darkening sky. "What? You don't want me here, pretty boy?"

Steve scoffs, nudging their knees together. "I doubt it would matter if I did. You do what you want." Billy frowns, he didn't want to be that guy anymore. "I'm...I'm not like that... anymore at least. If you don't want me here, I can leave." Steve turns to him, eyes wide, a smile tugging at the edges of his lips. "No. That's okay, Billy. I don't mind

it. The last time you were here though it didn't end... pretty."

Billy shivers as the images of Steve's face under his fists come back to him. That night when all he wanted to do was beat Neil's face in and he did it to Steve and traumatized some kids more than they already were. The thought of it made him feel disgusting. "Yeah. I know... I'm uh... I'm sorry about... that night." Billy felt shame burning him up from the inside, self-hatred burning the inside of his throat. He couldn't even apologize right.

Steve broke the silence with a laugh. A big, loud belly laugh that shocked Billy so much he almost fell off the hood. Steve grins at him, clapping him on the shoulder as he pulls him into a side hug. Billy felt like he was being made fun of, but he tried to push down the urge to punch Steve directly in the throat. "You're really shitty at apologies but I guess you're forgiven. I used to be a dick too, so I get it."

A wave of relief washed over Billy as he looked at Steve. He was smiling, his big brown, doe eyes sparkling in the low light. His skin looked so smooth, flawless, almost like porcelain. Billy felt himself reach out, caressing Steve's cheek gently. Steve's lips were pretty and pink as the smile slowly dropped from his lips. His bottom lip became pinched between his teeth. Billy was leaning in before he could stop himself, just wanting to...

The screen door to the Byers house suddenly creaks open loudly, the two boys jumping to stare at Will Byers. He was blushing, embarrassed *for* them, probably. Billy quickly stands as Will clears his throat. "Um...Mom wanted to know if um... you guys are coming inside?"

Steve nods, his face cherry red as he looks at the younger boy. "Uh... Yeah! We'll be right in." Will quickly retreated into the house, Billy felt his face grow even hotter as Steve looked at him. "So uh... You're coming inside right?"

Billy nods down at his shoes, following Steve inside the house.

Inside, Billy was sat between Steve and the chief of police. Billy had been pulled over by the guy a few times but hadn't had a lot of interaction with him otherwise. The rest of the group contained Will's mom, the older Byers kid, the Wheeler bitch, and some lesbian Steve was friends with. They were trying to make a plan if the cases got worse. They were set on staying in Hawkins and defending one home. The problems with that came in the forms of defense and how reliable it would be long-term. How would they defend against the spores, the infected? What if they became isolated inside the house? Where would they get food or water?

Billy was mostly silent until Joyce looked over at him from across the table and genuinely asked him what he thought was best. Silence descended upon the group, everyone looking toward Billy to let him speak. "Oh uh... I don't know... Hawkins is like... the epicenter of this shit right? If it gets worse shouldn't we just... leave?" Steve hums in agreement while sitting beside him. "I don't think that's a bad idea but where would we go?"

The discussion moved from defense and isolation to where the best place to go would be. Jonathan offered up Canada, but it was shot down when Nancy had already heard about the cases discovered up there as well. Billy offered up his grandfather's cabin in the woods of

Cali. It was isolated. It was in the Modoc National Forest, surrounded by nothing but wildlife and trees. Billy's grandfather was also... sort of crazy. He was obsessed with conspiracy theories and hated the government. As long as Billy had been alive his grandfather had been preparing for the end of the world. His entire property was made to survive something like this. It was prepped with a self-sustaining garden, solar generators, livestock, and huge fences.

Billy had planned on leaving for that house anyway if it got any worse. Everyone decided that the best plan was to pack up most of their stuff and head to Cali in the event of the infection getting worse.

After the discussion, Billy followed Steve out into the woods to collect Max. Steve was nervous, Billy could tell. When Steve was nervous, he talked... **A lot.** Most of the kids had been staying with each other. Dustin had been staying with the Wheelers as his mom had been off on a business trip and was now trapped in St. Louis because the airport was closed. Karen wheeler was sick and her husband wasn't fairing any better. Lucas's family wasn't doing much better than the Wheelers.

Steve led Billy to a little homemade fort with the words "Castle Byers" painted on the front. The kids were sitting around a little bonfire talking when they found them. Steve gave each of the kids a hug, saying goodbye as he left to go home. Billy stood off to the side, waiting for Max to get her stuff together before they headed home right behind him.

That night Billy dreamed about silky brown hair and soft pink lips whispering his name.

It only took another month and a half for things to get worse. The streets were covered with infected. The sickness had mutated again and spread even faster than before. Those that were still healthy wore masks at all times. The power had gone out, and the water was quick to follow. It had spread throughout the states and the last Billy heard; it was spreading throughout the world. It was declared a national emergency, but it was already too late. The military was called in, but they only lasted a few days before they turned tail and left the citizens of Hawkins to fend for themselves as the city of Indianapolis needed them more. It wasn't long before the bigger cities began falling, one after one. All the while, the infected seemed to just keep mutating.

Faster, stronger, angrier. The longer they were infected the more terrifying they got.

Billy didn't feel right about killing the infected at first. They were people once... but at some point, he had to decide between being street food and protecting himself and, more importantly, Max. It was gruesome but necessary. So, he started taking out infected, only if he couldn't avoid them. They started getting ready to leave for Cali.

Then getting supplies became an issue. It was too dangerous to go alone anymore. Billy still didn't know where he fits in with the rest of them, but it was nice to have some people to call. It was nice having someone there to watch his back. Even though he was starting to talk more to the others, Steve went with Billy most of the time. Steve understood him the best out of everyone. They'd been in similar situations before, he didn't judge Billy for anything he did in the past. Their relationship had always been weird. Besides, they made a good team. Steve knew when to call out to Billy for help, but could handle

most situations by himself. He was good under pressure and didn't treat Billy like he was some ticking time bomb like the others. He was... nice to him, even after all the shit Billy had put him through. Steve had even lent Billy one of his bats after he saw him defending himself with a rusted, half-broken tire iron.

There was also the problem of spore nests. The first time Billy found one he'd been with Steve on a run to get food and gas. They saw a few infected, but they were easily dealt with. They went into the store and started walking around, loading up their backpacks with the measly leftovers from other survivors. Steve always tried to make small talk. Billy had grown to like it.

"So um... Bills I wanted to um... talk to you about something." Billy just grunted in response as he examined the back of a box of mac and cheese for a best by date. Steve took a deep breath before he started to talk again. "Um... about that night...back at the Byers." Billy frowns down at the box, putting it in his backpack. "I thought I already apologized for that?" "No! Not that night um.. The night when you apologized and we almost-" Billy suddenly slapped a hand over Steve's mouth as a loud groaning echoed throughout the store. Billy dropped his backpack on the floor and raised his bat, stepping toward the backroom as Steve followed him, barely a step behind.

He adjusted the bandana around his face, making sure his nose and mouth were covered. He looked to Steve for confirmation that came in the form of a silent nod. He opened the door. Inside there was infected, four of them, but they couldn't move. They were completely immobile as an upside-down-like fungus had rendered their bodies stuck to the floor. Slime coated them from head to toe, huge spores of infection danced in the air like fairies, mushrooms grew from their flesh. The worst was their faces. They were completely unrecognizable. The fungus sprouted from their mouths and eyes. The only sound they were capable of making was a low suffering groan. They were being used as food for the spores to make more of

themselves. They didn't feel pain anymore... but even zombies didn't deserve this.

Steve ran from the scene first, all the way outside the front door of the store. Billy quickly followed, standing beside Steve silently as Steve sobbed. Only when he couldn't resist the urge any longer Billy turned away and threw up along the sidewalk, the images of fungus infested flesh burned into his brain.

The party was ready to leave a week later. The Wheelers had officially turned, followed by the Sinclairs. The kids were devastated but the only thing anyone could do was get them to safety. The tiny Beyers household was filled to the brim with people and Hawkins was no longer safe, but when had it ever been? They had three vehicles packed and ready to go that morning. Then it all dissolved into chaos.

Billy had been outside with Robin, helping her pack some things into his trunk. She groans as she jumps on a suitcase for the tenth time trying to get it to close again after she'd been snooping through Steve's things. "Jesus! What is with Steve and packing his entire life into this one suitcase!" She shouted out, finally giving up as she laid across the length of the rolling case. Billy snorts and drags her back up on her feet before packing away the clothes in a more organized fashion and zipping it up again. "What is with you and making everything more difficult than it needs to be, Buckley?" She scoffs and rolls her eyes as far back into her skull as they'll go. "Oh, bite me." Billy laughs, putting the suitcase in the back of the trunk before decided to go check on everyone inside.

The moment he walked indoors people were panicking. Steve was standing off to the side as white as a sheet, looking like he was going to throw up or pass out. "Stevie? What happened?" Billy shouted as he ran over to him, taking him by the shoulders as he watches Joyce run back into her bedroom carrying a large first aid kit with her.

Steve looked up at Billy as his body began to tremble. "H-he...he got bit, Bills. He-He was oh god!" Steve buried his face in Billy's chest as he clung to him tightly. "Who, Stevie? Who got bit?" Steve shook his head, sobbing as he clung to him even tighter. "Ho-Hop"

Billy cursed, hugging Steve closer to himself before taking him outside and putting him into his car. He loaded up the kids in the Wheelers minivan before rushing into Joyce's room. Jon, Joyce, Nancy, and Robin were all doing their best to not panic and heal Hop's wounds. It was already too late. Billy knew it. Joyce knew it. Everyone knew it. They all shared a glance before trying to tend to Hopper, anyway. Steve had gone with Hop to check the traps they had for wildlife in the hopes of getting meat to store for their trip. The infected must have been searching for food further away from town and some of them got to Hop.

They couldn't manage to stop the bleeding, and Hop was out of it. His breathing was already weak and the bite on his throat was causing him immense pain. Joyce began to weep as she held his trembling hand. There was nothing else anyone could do. They began saying their goodbyes in different ways, Jon hugging Hop before leaving the room with Nancy, Robin smiling at Hop and squeezing his shoulder before going out to the car. Joyce was the only one there, that couldn't let go. Billy left her alone in the house.

They spent a few hours waiting in their cars. Steve was a shell of himself, staring out the window white as a sheet. Robin was

completely silent for once. Billy didn't bother playing any of his music. They sat and waited until Jon got out of the van and went inside to get his mother. Billy didn't know what had happened in that house, but Jon ran out crying. Nancy got out of the van and walked up to Billy's window. They made a plan to leave the third vehicle, but take as many supplies from it as they could.

They were on the road an hour later.

They stopped that night in the quarry. There was a campground there next to a river. They were allowed to bathe for the first time in weeks. There wasn't any laughing or fun that night though. Everyone was lost, confused, and hurting. Billy felt bad he didn't share in their pain. He wasn't close to Hopper and, despite her best efforts, he barely knew Joyce. Billy had only lost his dad and... it wasn't much of a loss. Billy wasn't in pain. Billy was free.

He was finally free. Free from pain, fear, and anger. Free from walking on eggshells and holding his tongue. Free from torment and lectures. Free from agonizing about his future. He lay on the hood of his Camaro staring at the night sky spread out above him. The world was changing. The world was different now. Sure, they had monsters roaming around that wanted to eat them and spores that could still make them sick, but there were good changes too.

The animals were beginning to flourish. The world was quiet. Neil was dead. Billy almost felt guilty about the smile that crept onto his face, but he couldn't bring himself to do it. Neil was finally dead. He couldn't hurt him anymore. He couldn't make his life a living hell. He was finally safe.

Well... in a sense. It was ironic. The end of the world brought Billy so much peace. He felt like he was weirdly born for this. He felt like he was born to lead in the end times. He was born to hold his head up high when everyone else flinches and get his hands dirty when the others can't. His entire life had been leading up to this.

He sighs thinking about Susan. Sure, she never really did shit for him, but that was Max's mom. Neil deserved to die... Susan didn't. The loud crunching of footsteps on gravel dragged his attention away from his thoughts. Billy looked over to the side where Steve was squatting alongside the river's edge collecting water into cans and jugs to boil later.

Billy watched him for a moment before getting up and squatting beside him, helping him fill the jugs in silence. Steve finally broke the silence as they were finishing up. "Thank you for... getting me out of there today. I... I didn't know what to do." Billy shakes his head, rubbing Steve's shoulder as he looks at him. "You're fine. None of us knew what to do. You're fine right? You didn't get bit?" Steve shakes his head, tears welling up in his eyes as he thinks back. "N-No...Hop protected m-me." He mumbles as his tears spill down his cheeks.

Billy brought him in, squeezing him tightly to his chest, trying to comfort him as he cries. "I'm sorry, Stevie. I'm so sorry. It's gonna be okay." Steve nods, sobbing harder into him as Billy looks around the rest of the camp. They had to get to Cali... and soon.

3. The Highway Through Hell

Summary for the Chapter:

Traveling in the end times sorta sucks.

Notes for the Chapter:

IM SO SORRY FOR THE LATE UPDATE LIFE
FUCKING SUCKS SOMETIMES

The next morning was chaos. The kids were fighting amongst themselves. Jon, Jane, and Will were ghosts, silent and miserable. While Steve tried to maintain order, (He tried... and failed miserably. Steve absolutely could not be intimidating with the kids.) Nancy and Robin were ignoring the current predicament by packing up tents and supplies. Billy growls, already feeling his impending headache throbbing in his temples as the nasally, shrill voices of preteens bickering about nothing filled him with annoyance.

Here they were at the end of the world. Everyone's parents dead or missing. Their society with one foot in the grave. Nothing would ever be the same again and these kids... were arguing about some *stupid* game that they didn't have all the pieces to. Billy tried to contain himself, but the anger filled his words with venom before he could stop them. "Do you guys ever shut the **fuck** up? It doesn't matter! It's the end of the fucking world and you're arguing about game pieces! Are you all that moronic?" He snapped harshly, growling out his words.

Silence erupted over the camp. Billy sighs, regret filling his chest as he looks across the faces of shame, guilt, and anger the kids threw his way. Steve suddenly stood from his spot next to the children, stepping into Billy's space with a snarl. His normally soft, brown, doe eyes were alight with rage. His cheeks flushed red with enmity, instead of soft shyness. His pretty, pink lips pulled back with a growl.

“**You.** You don’t speak to them like that. *Ever.* They are *fine.* Whatever slight things that they can do to feel normal, you will fucking let them. Let them argue about games. Let them scream at each other until the fucking sky falls. I don’t care, but if you *ever* say anything like that to them again. I won’t stand for it. **Understood?**”

Billy felt like the entire universe was closing in on him as Steve pushed two fingers into his chest and pressed until it forced Billy to take a step back. Memories of that night in November swam into Billy’s head. He felt like he couldn’t get enough air into his lungs as he nods numbly. Neil’s screaming voice gripping at him from the depths of his mind. **“ISN’T THAT RIGHT? YOU FUCKING FAG.”** The sickening feeling of Steve’s beautiful face underneath his knuckles as he allowed his anger to consume him whole that night where he fucked up everything good he had going for him. Everything good *they* had going for **them.**

Billy had promised himself he would never hurt Steve ever again.

Billy couldn’t remember when he walked away from Steve and the campsite...

He didn’t know how long he’d been sitting by the river until he heard Steve softly call out his name, gentle like he could chase Billy away. Billy inhaled shakily, forcing himself to give him a fake and yet, charming half-smirk. “H-Hey, Stevie.” His voice was rough as he wiped at his eyes, trying to chase away the memories that were streaming down his cheeks. Steve stared at him with the most heartbroken face Billy had ever seen. “Oh, Bills... I’m so sorry, big guy. I didn’t... I didn’t think. I shouldn’t have spoken to you like that. I was just... so angry. You *really* know how to push my buttons.” He chuckles lightly, trying to break some tension as he steps closer to him. He paused long enough for Billy to pull away before he hugs

him, wrapping his arms around Billy's broad shoulders and squeezing. His voice was a breath in his ear. "I'm so sorry, Billy."

It was like the floodgates ripped open at his words. Billy's body trembled as he sobbed into Steve's shoulder, holding him as tightly as he could. His breath was coming in rushed, erratic gasps as he allowed himself to fall apart. Steve was his safety. Steve was always safe. Steve had always *been* safe.

After a while, Billy slowly calmed down. He felt embarrassed, but he stifled the urge to lash out as Steve gently placed a hand on his bicep and squeezed. They walked back to camp to find that everything had already gotten put away and stored in their vehicles. Everyone was waiting for them to come back. Billy silently climbed into Shelley's driver's seat. Robin wasn't in the back this time. Instead, Max and Dustin had taken up residence of the backseat, the two talking in hushed voices as they pulled away from their campsite.

Billy finally started feeling himself again around lunch when everyone had stopped to check the maps and eat some of their rations. They were nearing some bigger cities they would have to go through; St. Louis, Kansas City, Salt Lake City. Billy wasn't looking forward to it.

The bigger cities were where most of the problems had started. People, demanding answers from their government, had taken to the streets. The civil unrest had just increased the spread of the outbreak. The military and political powers lost control of those cities first. The last Billy heard over the radio was that St. Louis had already lost most of its population to the outbreak and the rest of the population was in a gang war between several groups of thugs. So... St. Louis had turned into a war zone with not only the infected but with asshole raiders.

As they neared St Louis, it was like the city was burning. Buildings were on fire for blocks, blockades, hordes of zombies. It was a miracle they even made it to the hotel at all. The parking garage was almost empty as Billy parked on the second story, Jon's vehicle slid into the spot next to the Camaro. All of them collectively taking a breath before getting out of the cars.

The hotel was shockingly empty. A few of the infected were milling about in the main lobby below them but not a horde as Billy had originally suspected. They formed a makeshift barricade on the second floor out of furniture they wouldn't need. With their half of the hallway secured, they went to work finding out which rooms were whose and who was bunking with whom.

The boys were starting to bicker about who was going to be sleeping in Max and Jane's room for 'protection'. Before Billy could even protest Max had rolled her eyes and stood up. "Okay number one: none of you could protect us. It would be us protecting you. Number two: who says we want to bunk with any of you? We're bunking with Will." She turned with a shake of her bright red head, Jane snickering as she followed her into her room. Will following along behind the two girls, blushing.

Billy was about to open his mouth to state that his little sister wouldn't be bunking with any boy until Steve knocked his shoulder into his. When he looked over at him he was shaking his head. It took Billy a moment to piece together the puzzle. Oh. Gay. Got it.

The rest of the boys were annoyed but didn't complain as they went into the room they'd picked out. Nancy and Jon were down the hall from them... Billy just hoped they weren't going to be loud. He could deal without the image or the sounds of the local creep fucking miss priss.

He saw Steve go into a room with Robin. The two were friends, so it wasn't too hard to assume they were going to share a room. Billy was the only one sleeping alone. It was fine though. He preferred it that way. Sometimes he still had night terrors.

Billy chose a room with a queen-sized mattress and a view toward the parking garage. It was only three doors down from Max, Jane, and Will. He could get to them quickly if there was any trouble. As he got ready for bed, he didn't expect to hear a knock at the door. Expecting it to be Max he opened the door with a huff. "What do you want shitbi-" Billy's voice died in his throat as he took in the sight of Steve Harrington in front of him.

He was shirtless. Hair unstyled and still damp from his shower. His pajama pants were hanging loosely off his hips as he stood in the doorway, his arms wrapped around his torso as he looked away almost... shy. It was cute. Really cute. "H-hey um... can I stay with you tonight? Um, Robin kinda kicked me out and I um... I don't want to sleep alone with everything going on."

Billy's brain had stopped, so it was a long moment until he processed what Steve had said. He nodded quickly, clearing his throat as he stepped back to allow Steve to walk through the threshold and into the room. He was desperately trying to get the memories of his teeth biting into the soft skin of Steve's shoulder out of his mind. The sounds he would make playing in his head like a broken record as Steve walks across the room to the bed. The gasp he would let out when Billy licked across his throat and pressed his lips to his pulse. The feeling of Steve beneath him, heart rapidly beating against his chest as his body hummed in pleasure. The memory of soft brown eyes rolling back in pleasure as he arched his back and cried out Billy's name.

It all surfaced in his mind and the blood rushed straight to his groin when Steve leaned back against the bed. The pale, sweet, soft skin on full display. Steve Harrington was ridiculously pretty. The most skilled artists in the world couldn't match the beauty that mother nature created when she made Steve. He was perfect, with his lopsided smile and his deep eyes. His soft, fluffy hair and the way he loved like he was dying. Steve Harrington loved so hard. There was nothing half-assed with Steve, especially his love. He loved hard and when he loved you. He loved you to the core.

Billy knew what it meant to be loved by Steve Harrington. He had been surrounded and emersed in that love. They had been good... almost perfect together and then... Billy fucked it up. Billy always fucks it up.

Steve raised an eyebrow at him as Billy stood at the foot of the bed, just staring at him. "So uh... You coming to bed or what Bills?" Billy nodded, swallowing down the sudden nervousness that settled into the pit of his stomach as he made his way over to the bed and settled down beside Steve Harrington like he hadn't done since before November.

A silence settled over the room as Billy stared at Steve's naked shoulder blades. He was admiring the skin, remembering what it felt like when Steve was on top. He remembered the times when he scratched his marks along those shoulder blades. His mind wandered off down memory lane for a moment until Steve suddenly turned around. His normally soft brown eyes were bright, tears welling up as he stared hard into Billy's eyes. Billy felt his breath catch as tears swelled up in his own eyes.

Steve made a soft, choking sound before his tears spilled down his cheeks. "I-I miss you!" He cries as he covers his face and Billy couldn't stop himself from pulling him to his chest. "I know... I know, baby. I miss you too." Steve's sobs raised in volume as he weakly punched Billy's chest. "Asshole! Y-You fu-fucking asshole! Wh-Why d'you d-do that? Wh-why did you j-just disappear like that!"

Billy resisted the urge to scoff. It was so like Steve to get upset at Billy for avoiding him and not for beating the shit out of him, to begin with. "I thought... It would've been better..." Billy murmurs in response as Steve pulls back to slap him. Suddenly kissing him passionately, growling against his lips. "It fucking wasn't."

4. Expired Company

Summary for the Chapter:

The gang tries to make it out of Saint Louis

Notes for the Chapter:

Hi this chapter starts with some NSFW...you've been warned.

Billy groans into Steve's mouth, pulling him closer as Steve's fingers tangle themselves in his hair and pull. Billy gasps, breaking the kiss as Steve pulls his head back to expose his throat. "You absolute. fucking. Prick." He growls against his skin before he bites into Billy's throat. Billy couldn't help the moan that tumbled from his lips as Steve rolled on top of him, pinning his hands above his head as he grinds his hips into Billy's. "Fuck Bills. I fucking love you." He whines out, letting his head fall back as his hips move against Billy's. "Fuck, baby. God. I love yo-ahh you too." Billy mutters as he pulls his hands away and they find purchase on Steve's hips.

Steve moans as he feels Billy get hard underneath him. "Love you so much. Can't do anything wrong. Always need you to come back. Don't care what you do. Don't matter. You're mine. Drove me crazy. Pretending like we were just friends. Bullshit. Love you. Love you too much." Steve babbles, tears running down his cheeks as he lets out a soft sob. Billy was kicking himself again. He moves them, pulling Steve to lie down on his back, kissing along his cheekbones as one of his hands caresses his face and rubs away his tears. He leans down pulling Steve into passionate kisses as he murmurs in his softest voice to him. "I know, darling. I know, my sweet, precious thing. I'm sorry, baby. I'm so sorry, my love. I was so mad. Hated myself for hurting you. Knew the only way to keep you safe was to leave you alone. Love you too much to hurt you like that again, baby. All I do is break things, Stevie. I'm not good for you. "

Steve was really crying now. "No! That night was my fault too! I don't care if you hurt me! I love you. Need you too much. Never leave. Never again. Promise me, Bills. Please." He begs him between sobs, his hands caressing Billy's face, soft brown eyes boring into Billy's soul. Billy snuffles, smiling softly as he pulls him into another kiss. This one was softer, sweeter. The urgency fading slightly as Billy holds him tighter, lips ghosting with Steve's as he says "You should care baby but I promise. I won't hurt you again I swear. God, I love you. You're so beautiful, Stevie."

Steve pulls him into more kisses, each one deeper and more desperate than the last. Billy growls as his hips grind together with Steve's at the perfect angle, giving him some much-needed friction. Steve gasps against his lips. His voice letting out the prettiest moan for Billy. Steve always made the most beautiful sounds when Billy was on top of him like this. Billy couldn't stand waiting any longer as he pulls away to drag Steve's bottoms off his hips. His mouth finding purchase on his neck, leaving hot, passionate kisses and gentle bites down his body.

Steve squirms below him, whining in need as he lifts his hips toward Billy's touches. "fuck-Bills, please. Need you. Need you so bad." Billy can't help the smile he presses into Steve's hip, kissing and biting his way along his thighs until Steve was shivering and hard as a rock in his briefs below him. Billy couldn't resist a little more teasing, even as Steve breathlessly begs below him. He kisses along Steve's length through the thin fabric of his underwear. Steve whimpers loudly, thighs tensing under Billy's hands.

Billy mumbles words of encouragement as he slips off Steve's underwear. His gruff voice mumbling words of praise and love. Fondness fills every syllable he speaks as he tells Steve how beautiful and perfect he is. Steve was a mess from the words alone, whining and moaning with every single kiss or lick Billy gave him. When Billy finally took him into his mouth, Steve practically screamed, already

his thighs shook, so desperate underneath Billy. His body would arch into every touch, his mouth left hanging open to moan, gasp and whimper.

Billy hadn't felt Steve in over a year. It'd been a year since he'd held him, touched him, made love to him. He wanted to make this last, but they were both too desperate. Steve squirms, tugging roughly at Billy's hair. "No-Ahh~ Bills please..fuck ahh- Shit. Wanna come with you inside. Please. Daddy." Billy growls as the name goes straight to his groin. He hadn't heard that name from Steve in a *long* time.

He pulls off of him, smiling up at him as he gently licks the slit of Steve's cock. "Mmm Okay. God, you're so good for me, Princess." He praises, kissing up Steve's body, kissing his lips sweetly, before he stands. He shucks off his clothes and grabs his bag in the corner. He quickly finds his makeshift lube. A container of vaseline he kept in the front pocket of his bag for treating wounds, soothing the itchiness of his stubble after a shave and for long, lonely nights.

Steve was watching him with a smile when he turned back around. They'd done this so many times before, but Steve laid out bare in front of Billy, always takes his breath away. Steve lets out a shy laugh, looking away as Billy climbs back into bed with him. "You're so fucking pretty, Princess." He growls as he pulls him into passionate kisses, digging two of his fingers into the jar of vaseline and coating them before pulling back and fingering open the god below him.

Steve always reacted so well to Billy. It was like the world created Steve, especially for Billy. Where he was so easily irritated and quick to make an assumption, Steve was calm and patient. They fit so well together and as Billy pressed himself deep into Steve he groans softly, Steve gasping and digging his nails into his shoulders, Billy told him

as much. Billy let himself ramble on about how amazing and perfect Steve was as he thrust lovingly into him. His hips starting a slow deep rhythm, holding Steve so close to him as the two rocked together.

It didn't take long for Billy to feel close. It was too much, and it'd been far too long. Steve whines below him, gasping and whimpering. "Daddy. Daddy. Fuck! I'm so clo-close!" He gasps, arching his back as Billy thrusts into him particularly well. Billy growls, his thrusts speeding up slightly as he feels his incoming orgasm. "Yeah, baby. Me too. Fuck. Are you gonna come for me, baby? Be a good boy. Cum for daddy, baby."

Steve cries out as he spills between them, cumming completely untouched. Billy groans at the thought and a few thrusts later and Billy had reached his limit. He growled and bit into Steve's jugular as he came inside of him. Steve's yell echoed throughout the quiet room as he arched into Billy's bite and shuddered at the feeling of being filled.

The two spent a few long moments after Billy had pulled out, panting, staring into each other's eyes. Steve giggles breathlessly, tangling his fingers in Billy's sweaty curls and pulling him into a sweet kiss. "I love you, big guy..." He whispers against his lips as Billy smiles and pulls him closer, kissing his head as he snuggles into his chest. "I love you too, Princess. So fucking much." He mumbles as the two drift off to sleep.

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Billy wakes up the next morning with the sunlight streaming in through the curtains, surrounded by the feeling of warmth and

comfort. He sighs contently, not being able to stop his sleepy smile as he feels Steve's lips pressing to his neck. Steve hums happily, slowly letting his kisses turn into hickeys as Billy groans playfully. His groan cuts off with a growl as Steve buries his teeth into his skin.

Steve giggles as he pulls away and sits up. "C'mon! Let's take a shower~" He purrs, kissing him all soft, tugging at Billy to get up. Billy chuckles and finally rises, the two slowly making their way to the bathroom. Billy wraps himself tightly behind Steve as the warm water trickles down on them. He peppers kisses across Steve's shoulder, who hums and leans back into him. The two enjoy a long warm shower together, mostly basking in each other's presence than focusing on getting clean. Billy gives Steve extra attention though, making sure he was clean and relaxed.

While the two were getting dressed, they heard a commotion happening down the hall. Billy got dressed quickly, kissing Steve before bolting into the hallway. The commotion was coming from the kid's rooms. He burst into the room to see them all standing at the window in various states of distress. Billy was asking what all the noise was about when he saw the huge hoard of infected surrounding the building. He blinks, staring out the window into what looked like a sea of undead. Dread feels his chest before he quickly decides on action.

He didn't waste any time getting the kids ready before pivoting to the rest of his group. He made the other teens aware of the very precarious situation they were a part of. They wasted no time getting their supplies in order. They all hesitate before taking down the barricade, listening for signs that the infected had made it into the building. It was, thankfully, silent and still inside the old hotel.

They all descended the stairs two at a time, the thought of getting

trapped in the stairwell terrifying and definitely not at the top of Billy's to-do list. By the time they made it to the lobby, the infected were filing in through broken glass doors. Billy curses, back to back with Steve. The two swung at the nearest infected while their friends made a break toward the parking garage and their waiting cars.

Billy fought harder than ever. He fucking hated this. He wanted Steve to leave with the others, head toward the parking garage, but Steve was too stubborn. "Shut the fuck up, Hargrove! I'm not leaving you!" Billy groans, slamming the nails of his bat into the head of another poor infected fuck. "Stop fucking arguing and GO, Harrington!"

Steve growls, finally obeying him and dashing toward the exit. Billy sighs in relief. Then a feeling of fear overwhelms him. Shit... there were way too many of them. If he got out of this... He would have to be lucky. Billy jumps as the fire alarm suddenly rings out through the building. It attracted the infected to the sound, letting Billy follow Steve.

Billy had never moved so fast in his life. When he finally made it to the cars, he could hardly breathe. Everyone was panic-stricken, trying to gather up their things as quickly as possible. Steve was panting just as hard as Billy was, holding a fire ax. Billy smiles at him despite himself. "Solid call. I think that saved my life." He says between pants of air.

Steve smiles at him. "Yeah. Well, you saved all of our asses back there. The least I can do to return the favor. You stubborn dick." He pulls Billy in, hugging him tightly. The reunion got cut short as the angry groans of the infected filled the empty parking garage. Fuck their damn sense of smell. Billy curses, trying to load everyone up as quickly as possible. Dustin narrowly missed several of the infected, reaching out to grab him as he slammed his door and Billy started the

engine. Their tires squeal as they speed out of the garage as quickly as the engines would allow.

Back on the road, the silence envelops the car. Billy's Camaro contained himself, Steve, Dustin, and Max. The kids slowly calmed down enough to talk to each other again, and Steve found some tapes to play some music. Billy sighs in relief as they got back onto the mostly empty highway.

The kids were too busy talking and playing some road game to notice Billy taking Steve's hand. He intertwines their fingers, squeezing his digits tightly before bringing the back of his hand up to his mouth and placing a kiss on the skin. He gently mumbles, "I love you. Don't need you getting hurt, Princess." His voice barely above a whisper, lips ghosting over his skin. Steve smiles softly, leaning into him, pressing a kiss to his jaw as Billy focuses on the road. "I'll never get hurt, baby. You're here to protect me. Just like I'm here to protect you." His voice was soft and reassuring in Billy's ear, easing some tension from his body as they sped toward their destination.